

Prabuddha Bharata

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GLIMPSES

WHAT discriminating man could have stood the blows and buffets of the world untroubled, if by the teaching of the good and the wise the mind did not enter into rest and peace?

—*Yoga Vasistha.*

THE greatest evils are from within us, and from ourselves also we must look for our greatest good.

—*Jeremy Taylor.*

MOST men spend most of their lives in making the rest miserable.

—*La Bruyere.*

THE fraction of life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your numerator as by lessening your denominator. Nay, unless my algebra deceive me, unity, itself divided by zero, will give infinity. Make thy claim of wages a zero then; thou hast the world under thy feet. Well did the wisest of our time write: "It is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin."

—*Carlyle.*

My son, if you desire for *Mukti*, eschew the sense-objects as poison, and take to forgiveness, sincerity, kindness, contentment and truth, as nectar.

—*Ashtabakra.*

ALL sacred books, all revelations, are secondary to the soul.

—*Rev. Solon Lauer.*

WHEN immortality is taught as a doctrine, man is already fallen.

—*Emerson.*

THAT which is practised always by the wise, good and self-controlled and which is readily sanctioned by the heart, is *Dharma*.

—*Manu.*

DISCRETION in speech is more than eloquence. When you doubt, abstain.

—*Bacon.*

IF there are two courses of action open to you, always choose the disagreeable. It is sure to be the right one.

—*General Redvers Buller.*

THAT religion, philosophy, or party that does not reach down to the lowliest home, and the most oppressed human being, was not born in heaven.

—*F. Parker.*

THOU All-in-All! Thou art the force-principle of all that ever was, is, and shall be, real or phenomenal, in the contents of space and time. How to glorify Thee?

—*Mārkaṇḍeya Chanakya.*

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

THE NATURE OF THE WORLDLY-MINDED—III

By talking with a worldly man one can feel that his heart is full of worldly thoughts and desires, even as the crop of a pigeon is seen full of grains.

A GROUP of fisherwomen on their way home from a distant market, were overtaken by a heavy hailstorm, in the middle of their way, and so were compelled to take shelter in a florist's house near by. The florist kindly allowed them to sleep that night in one of his rooms, where some baskets of sweet-smelling flowers had been kept. The atmosphere of the room was too good for the fisherwomen, and they could not, owing to the sweet smell, get even a wink of sleep, till one of them suggested a remedy by saying, 'Let us sprinkle a little water on our empty baskets of fish and keep them close to us and thus prevent this troublesome smell of flowers from attacking our nostrils and interfering with our sleep.' Every one gladly agreed to the proposal, and did so accordingly with the effect that all of them soon began to snore! Such, indeed, is the power and influence of deeply accustomed habits! The worldly soul brought up and habituated in material surroundings and thoughts cannot breathe and live long in an atmosphere of purity and renunciation without feeling restlessness and dislike.

WHEN the Malaya breeze blows, only those trees, that have stamina in them, are converted into sandal-trees; but those which have no stamina remain unchanged, like the bamboo, plantain, etc. Thus when Divine grace descends, men having the germs of piety and goodness in them are changed at once into holy beings and are infilled with Divinity, but worthless and worldly men remain as before.

A WORLDLY man is best known by his antipathy to whatever savours of religion. He not only dislikes to hear any sacred music or hymn, or to utter the holy name of God, but dissuades others from doing the same. He scoffs at prayers and pours down volleys of abuse upon all religious societies and men.

[To let them do and think as they like, which they could not, if compelled to stay in our company] I say to those who, I see, do not care for the spiritual life at all, "Go and sit outside there, if you like," or, "Go and have a look at those grand buildings," (meaning the temples on the place.)

ALSO I have seen the worldly-minded coming with pious devotees to me. They have no liking for religious conversations. They become so very impatient and restless while others are having a long talk on God and spirituality that they find it too much to sit still, always whispering in their friend's ears, "When are you going? How long are you going to stay here?" Their friends sometimes say, "Wait a little, we are coming presently." Disgusted with their words these tell them, "Then, you had better talk, we go now and shall wait for you on the boat," (which was to take them back to Calcutta.)

THE man immersed in worldliness cannot attain the knowledge divine. He cannot see God.

Does the muddy water ever reflect the sun or any surrounding object?

AS water flowing down a bridge from one side soon passes out to the other, the same is the case with spiritual teachings in regard to worldly souls. It enters into them by one ear and goes out by the other, without leaving any impression upon their minds.

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF NAG MAHASHAYA

(Concluded)

WHO can survey the infinite expanse of the soul which ceases to lean upon the frail supports of the world and unites itself in eternal relation with its final cause? Vain would be our attempt to describe even partially the spiritual conditions experienced by Nag Mahashaya after his complete release from all worldly responsibilities. Yet there was something about him which would insensibly lead even the most confirmed materialist to the recognition of a force, power or reality beyond the plane of matter. There was nothing in his externals that could show to any advantage the grand factors of his inner life. On the contrary, they tended to conceal much from the view of strangers. Any one who did not know him or marked his sweet divine face might readily take him for an ordinary man. But as soon as a stranger's eyes would meet his and catch a sight of his face he was sure to be struck with its peculiarly charming expression. Closer intercourse would deepen the feeling roused at first sight and the most apathetic mind was sure to be lifted to a blissful mood of abstraction as the glory of his soul broke forth in a few softly sweet, pregnant words quivering with emotion. These words needed no explanation or arguments to make their meaning clear. They were simple in the extreme and were only the verbal pictures of his own life. Every movement of his limbs was in perfect accord with, nay, more significant than what he said. His humility was quite unlike what ordinarily passes for it. It did not consist in some set speeches skillfully delivered, with gesticulations made-to-order, to pander to the vanity of

the self by seeking glorification in the mask of humility. Nor did it bear any resemblance to that lowliness of heart born of bitter feelings which wrong deeds ever breed in every true conscience. True humility does not throw the mind into the dark depths of despond, but by raising everything in its own estimation, unconsciously melts away the harsh, hard grains of the self. It is the natural outcome of that spotless purity of heart which totally precludes the idea of evil from the mind and clothes every surrounding object in its own effulgent spiritual light. We cannot believe that Nag Mahashaya could ever think himself a sinner, for that he never really was, and spirituality does not give a wrong vision. Yet he was never seen to hold up his head before others—he was always drooping down, as it were, with the weight of humility. We all know how out of a sense of his own unworthiness he could not touch the feet of the Master, while paying his respects to him in the usual Hindu way, though he was all along burning with the desire to do so—and how when one day the Master asked him to see what was the matter with his feet and to shampoo them lightly, he became quite unconscious with emotion at the touch. Yet we have got unerring testimony of the fact that Nag Mahashaya was in full possession of that pure approbation of conscience which the conquest of the lower nature always brings to man and finally leads to a thorough identification with the Absolute Purity Itself.

When his father was on his death bed Nag Mahashaya noticed some marks of agony on his face. Suddenly his whole nature seemed

to change and he began to go round and round his father's bed with his face glowing with vehement emotion which burst forth at last in the following startling utterance: "What? My father suffers from death pangs! If there is any liberated soul on earth it is I. If there is any god on earth, I say, it is I. Oh Sun and Moon! in your presence as my witness I take upon myself any sin that my father may have committed in life. Be he completely released from it". As he was uttering these words his father calmly passed away giving the impression to many that he entered into final bliss. Nag Mahashaya was all along quite sure that his father attained perfect liberation after death.

Nag Mahashaya was all sympathy and love. One day a cow strayed into the compound of his house and was trying in vain to force its mouth through a thorny hedge to get at a calabash plant which was inside it. On seeing this, Nag Mahashaya ran up to her help, cleared out the thorn from the hedge and watched with extreme delight the cow make a good feast of the plant. Even to pluck a flower or a leaf from a living tree was impossible for him. We know how he could not cut down the branch of a bamboo which forced its passage through the thatch into his room. He was always very loth to make any man work for him in any capacity. If he was ever compelled to get any he would not let him work for more than an hour or two in a day, then apologise to him in the most touching way, give him the whole day's wages and take him home in a boat rowing it all the way himself.

People used to come to see him at his house from great distances. He received and attended to them in a way that passes all description. His hospitality was true worship spontaneous expression of his inner convictions. He was physically very weak. Yet

he displayed infinite joy and energy in providing for the comforts of his guests. He would immediately run to the market, have the choicest things available, and carry them home on his own head like a simple village child. Having got the nicest dishes prepared from them he would serve them with profound love, joy and veneration. His bargaining too, it should be noticed here, was peculiar. He would never speak a single word against the price demanded by the seller, but paid it up at once. His mind was too full of divinity to allow any suspicion of others' conduct, and the result was marvelous. His divine character had a wonderful effect upon the market-men of the village. They often tried to induce him to take things cheaper, instead of trying to make him pay more for them. On one occasion Nag Mahashaya really forced into the hands of a man more than the price charged for a thing he bought of him, because, he said, he had seen another customer get a worse thing at a higher price from the same man.

Many a night would Nag Mahashaya pass in the open yard of his house, or under the eaves of the thatched roof when he thought it would be uncomfortable for his guests if he occupied a part of his only room in which he had put them.

His spiritual longing was too deep to be satisfied with anything short of the highest. Every new experience only added a fresh impulse to it, and his mind finally reached a state of such extreme sensitiveness that every event, however remotely suggestive of his God, would at once galvanise his whole system.

After the passing away of the Master it came to the knowledge of the Swami Vivekananda that Durgacharan had been lying down for five or six days without taking any food or drink. The Swamiji immediately came

to Kumartuli to the humble quarters of Nag Mahashaya and said he would like him very much to cook some food for him (Swamiji), hoping to be able in this way to induce Nag Mahashaya to eat something. Nag Mahashaya speedily got everything ready and helped Swamiji. After he had eaten, Swamiji asked Nag Mahashaya to take something. Nag Mahashaya struck the cooking pot on his fore-head and said, "Shall I feed that body again which could not obtain God?"

For the last twenty five years of his life he had not bathed once and never took more than two mouthfuls of rice a day. The outside man was, as has already been said before, poorest of the poor. The Master used to point him out as a model of true humility. "Mercy" and "I am not" were the words often heard from his lips. He could not even express his intense desire to eat of food partaken of by the Master. For years he had kept this desire locked up in his breast. When he was taken fatally ill at the

Cossipore gardens and could not even swallow liquid food, Sri Ramakrishna ordered one day a sumptuous feast to be prepared. The Master then ate a little from every dish that was cooked and gave the remnants to Durgacharan.

At 2 o'clock on the third night but last before his death, he said: "Sri Ramakrishna Deva has come, he will show me the holy places of pilgrimage." They began to call aloud the names of holy places and he was soon lost in *samadhi*. On the day of his death he asked one of his devoted disciples to perform some auspicious ceremonies and said he would leave the body that day. On the morning of the 27th December last at three minutes to 10, he entered into his last *samadhi*, uttering the name "Ramakrishna" thrice. His body was warm till 11 o'clock. It has been well said of him: "He was a living illustration of the saying in the Imitation of Christ, 'Dying to self and living eternally to Me'."

LESSONS FROM NATURE

II

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

—Shakespeare.

THE works of great men tell us what their authors have to teach us. In order to learn what God has to teach us, we should turn to his great work—Nature. To a superficial observer Nature may seem only a collection of curiosities, made only to amuse man, its Lord: but if one has the vision of a poet or a philosopher one will see as Shakespeare

did, that trees have tongues to tell us what we should do, that every flower and blossom in the garden has some lesson for the human mind. 'A thoughtful man may learn much of God's wisdom and goodness amid the solitude of Nature,' is well said by some author. Let us only make ourselves one with Nature and we shall hear what it has to say to us. But every one cannot be a poet or a philosopher, hence the vivid lessons which Nature has to teach us should be learnt by carefully studying the natural laws in the light which science

redeemed from the shackles of materialism has thrown upon them.

Let us first take the Law of Gravitation. This law prevails throughout the whole universe. By virtue of the force of gravity every substance on and about the earth tends to go to its centre, and every member of the solar system to the sun—the centre of the system. This is the natural law and we see its action every day when a stone falls to the ground, or when we exert some upward force in lifting a weight. The human body is subject to the same law, we know. But what about the finer and subtler part of man that is called Mind or Soul? This has also a centre and is trying at all times to go to that centre, it being God, the Infinite Soul. Our Soul craves to join its fountain-head, but is prevented from doing so by many forces which surround it. The case is analogous with that of the planets. The planets have a tendency under the force of gravitation to go to their centre, the sun, but they are hindered from doing so by many forces, their inertia being the chief. Let all such forces, (for convention I may call them negative forces) be taken away and the planet will at once go with a vehemence to the sun and being melted by the impact, will become one with it. In the same manner let the inertia of man—selfishness and other negative forces such as pride, sensual appetites, love of wealth, anger &c. be got rid of, the human soul would fly at once to the Eternal All-pervading Soul and become one with it. This is the happy union between man and God,—the union which is desired by every one in the universe.

Secondly, let us take the Law of Level. That water keeps its level, is a well known fact in nature. Besides this, heat, electricity &c. also tend to maintain the same intensity throughout, which amounts to the same thing as that they also tend to keep their level. Let two heated bodies of different temperatures be

brought together, an interchange of heat will take place until both are at the same temperature or level of heat. The same is the case with electricity, a stronger current influences a weaker until both have the same volt power. From this great law the lesson to be learnt is to maintain equality between man and man. This law takes away the exclusive right of some persons to enjoy wealth without sharing it with others. Water flows from a higher level to a lower, so wealth should flow from the rich to the poor. This establishes the law of charity. The great aim of Political Economy is to bring about an equal distribution of the wealth of a nation among all its members.

Next, let us take into consideration the Law of Cohesion. There would have been no tables, no chairs, no houses, no earth, in fact no *thing* had there been no force of cohesion. In order that there may be something material, there ought to exist some cohesion between the particles which make up the body. This force when translated into the language of spirit is *love*. There can exist no society, no nation, if there be no love among the members. Fellow-feeling and love are one in kind. Let those who are eager to constitute a Nation or a Society, or those who wish to live a happy life love their associates more and more and their desire will be fulfilled.

Let us now consider the Laws of Conduction and Induction. We see that, when a heated bar of iron is brought in contact with another cold bar, after a short time both become heated, as when a red hot iron ball is placed near you, you feel the heat at once. How is this heat conveyed from one body to another? In the former case it was by conduction, while in the latter through induction. In the same manner when a person comes in contact with a good or bad man, he is at once affected by his good or bad qualities. The scientists tell us that every moment particles of matter are given out and taken in by the human body,

and the Theosophists and the Yogis add that these particles are magnetised by the good or bad qualities of the man from whom they start. For this reason the greatest care ought to be taken in the choice of a companion. Go to good men—saints—and you will get some of their goodness. Their virtues would act on you either by induction or conduction: by induction when you sit by them and hear their words;

and by conduction when you serve them bodily and come in contact with their bodies. *Sat sanga* is the first thing recommended for a seeker after truth. This testifies to the fact that the virtues of the good operate on others by induction. The same is the case with bad men. They have nothing to give but their vices, hence shun bad company and try always to live in *Sat sanga*—good company.

BAWA BUDH SINGH

Something beyond. ॐ ॐ ॐ

PROBLEM OF THE INFINITE

THIL one question above all others, the question of questions which the student of the Vedanta Philosophy should very clearly answer to himself, is the question of the existence of the infinite. Is there really what is called the infinite existence, or is it merely a figment of the imagination? "All appearances, however, go to prove that the idea of the infinite is an absurdity. Our mental capacity is beyond the shade of a doubt full of limitations, and since we have no other means of knowledge but the mind, the infinite even if it did exist could not be cognised by it; so all attempts at determination of the existence of the infinite cannot but be futile"—might be the objection raised at the very outset.

That we cannot approach to the conception of the infinite directly, goes without saying. But direct proof is not the only instrument which we possess to attain to a truth. Indirect proof, proof by negation of the possibility of every other conception, condition, or thing, save the one enunciated or sought to be proved, holds as good and strong a position even in the exact sciences, as its correlative, the direct method. True enough we cannot represent in thought a

full and exhaustive picture of the infinite existence, but we can show that if we assume the sum total of existence to be a limited quantity, this very assumption would require the existence of a correlative outside of it which could alone make the limit possible. For what is a limit but a relation? And the idea of relation is only possible when there is a mental representation of *two*. So in our attempt to think of existence as a limited quantity, there always remains something beyond, something outside limit which our thought cannot transcend or bring within bounds, and we are compelled to recognise the existence of the infinite, although we can never hope, so long as our mind is constituted as it is, to have anything like a full view of it.

Let us try to illustrate this position more clearly, if possible. We can reduce the whole of existence into three distinct concepts: space, time and causation. There is nothing which could be mentally represented which does not fall under one or the other of these heads. Now let us see if we can find out the limit of space. If we take for granted that something limits space, that *something* must be regarded either as a body

or as a void, for any other 'something' besides these two is mentally non-representable. Now, inasmuch as a body or a void cannot be thought of as existing without space, the idea of a limit to space becomes an absurdity. So we are constrained to admit that space is without limit or infinite.

In the same manner it can be proved that time is beginning-and-endless. For if we take for granted a beginning or an end of it, both will be *points of time*, which cannot be thought of otherwise than as either past, present or future. Now inasmuch as each one of these three requires for its existence the other two to go before and follow after it, the beginning or end of time is inconceivable. Thus it becomes clear that time is infinite in both directions.

If again we regard the chain of causality to have a beginning, we must have to conceive a first cause, *i. e.* a state of things *before* which there existed no other state of things. Could such a cause be the cause of any effect? Let us see. As it is unproduced, it must necessarily be changeless. For if there was any change in it, that change must have been due to some cause outside of it, *i. e.* some other state of things which was in existence before it. But this is by hypothesis impossible.

If again it is argued that there were two first state of things coeval with each other, themselves unproduced, but forming the first links of the causal chain, we fare no better. For to conceive the birth of the first effect, we have under this hypothesis, but two alternatives to choose between. The first is, that both exercise an influence for change upon each other, and the second, that the one remains unchanged. Now, in either of these two conceptions, apart from the absurdity of the idea of the existence before all things of a couple of unproduced twins, the same insurmountable difficulty of conceiving a

beginning of the occurrence of change *without cause* presents itself to our thought. For what was the cause which made such modifications in the one that it began to influence the other for change? Or in the other case, how were modifications introduced in both that they acted upon each other?

The existence of inherent properties for change being inadmissible by hypothesis,* we are reduced to the position of accepting the chain of causality as without beginning and end, therefore infinite.

But right here the gravest difficulty faces us. Well and good that we have demonstrated each one of the triad, space, time and causality to be infinite. But could there be three infinities,—three infinities, each distinct from the others? Why, in that case it is plain that each one is limited by the others, therefore no one of them is infinite.

* For if there was change inherent in the first cause, there could have been no *first* state of things, inasmuch as that state was a changeful state, which fact necessitates the assumption of the existence of another state of which the former was a change and so on without end.

Hand in hand with our inability to think of a first state of things, the determination of the cause of variety becomes impossible. The *beginning* of variety is in the number *two*. On a little reflexion it will be seen that we cannot transcend this number in our thought. We have seen we cannot think of a first state of things, *i. e.* a state which is beyond the duality of cause and effect. Wherever our thought goes the chain of cause and effect (*i. e.* variety) is there.

If it is supposed that God acting upon matter has produced this variegated universe, the fatal objection (apart from a whole host of insuperable moral ones) of occurring change in God awaits us. For what causes Him to act? Some NECESSITY from either inside or outside. We cannot also conceive of any act without *change* occurring in the actor before and after it. That which is subject to necessity and change cannot be God.

Again, if it were argued that God did not act, but by the virtue of His mere presence matter under-

But we have demonstrated each one to be without a beginning or an end.

Under these circumstances there is only one position thinkable, only one solution possible of this hard problem. It is this. Space, time and causality are no real objects at all, they are but the different aspects of one infinite existence, which, because we see it with our finite mind, is not rightly perceived but is twisted and distorted into a vision of three infinities.

Let us examine this position.

Pure and simple space is mentally non-picturable. To think of space we cannot but represent it as being within limits, having a colour and shape and so forth. Space, therefore, might be defined as that mental representation by which we determine the

went changes, both God and matter would in that case be *finite*, and *therefore* subject to change. For there would be *two* existences, and so matter would limit God and *vice versa*.

That God cannot be both finite and unchangeable, a little reflection will show. If God is conscious (if unconscious, He will be no God), He will be conscious of matter and its changes. The relation of Subject and Object, Knower and Known will never be absent. With the unending changes of matter, His God-consciousness will be covered over by a constantly changing series of consciousness of changeful matter. So His Being will be divided between, or consist of these two sorts of consciousness, which is ungodly.

The above considerations teach us, among other things, that no Personal Creator is responsible for the universe: and that we can never know the Final Cause or Causes of things by *thinking* or *reasoning*.

The limitations of our thinking faculty makes it impossible for us to transcend the world of effect. "All thinking," said Goethe, "will not lead us to thought".

Questions about final causes, therefore, are unanswerable by the intellect. These should only be asked then, to learn that they could not be answered *i. e.*, the why of their being unanswerable.

By stilling the action of the thinking faculty alone could the final Cause be known.

relative position of things towards each other. It is therefore merely a relation, the relation of position between things, not an independent object by itself.

In the same manner, following exactly the same line of argument, it could be shown that the representations of time and causation are not independent entities; but relations of sequence and order of action respectively.

The next step that lies before us is to find out what the thing is of which the relation of space, time and causality are the infinite aspects.

Outside things can only furnish us with sensations, —with distinct, isolated perceptions. But relations are the connecting links between these. Consequently it is evident that perception cannot furnish us with the ideas of relation. The finding of relation between perceptions is therefore the work of the inner man—the perceiving agent. But inasmuch as the perceiving agent with all his panoply of intellect, mind, &c. is a finite entity, he cannot possibly be the source of these 'infinite' relations of space, time and causality. These flow, therefore, from the very inner nature of the perceiving agent—a nature, which is not evidently exhausted by the limited feeling of self-consciousness. The perceiver is very naturally unconscious of the fact that it is his own being that supplies him with the representations of space, time and causality, because his phenomenal identity—his self-consciousness, does not transcend these relations for the very sufficient reason that it is within space, time and causality.

Therefore it is clear that the infinite existence of which space, time and causality are but aspects, is neither matter, nor mind, nor the relations between them, but the very innermost being of self-conscious man—a state of being which lies transcending the

limits of self-consciousness.

Here we may note *en passant* that whether we take the materialistic position and say with Prof. Tyndall, that "the soul [the self-conscious element in beings] is a poetic rendering of a phenomenon which refuses the yoke of ordinary physical laws"† which in simple prose means that consciousness, for all that we know, might be the product of the brain, though we do not yet exactly know the laws by which we can verify this assertion; or we may take the idealistic position, and say with the good Bishop Berkeley that the belief in the existence of an exterior material world is false and inconsistent with itself; that those things which are called sensible material objects are not external but exist in the mind; or we may take any position which is either one of these modified, or intermediate between these two,—in any case, the definition which we have given above of the infinite existence will hold good, since in all cases *perceptions* and cognition of the link of *relations* between them presuppose the existence of self-consciousness.

Once the existence of the infinite is proved,—once the fact of the infinite existence is clearly understood, important issues follow as a matter of course. The first and gravest is that causation or change is impossible in the infinite, as the infinite cannot become that which it was not from the first. Even the slightest change or modification in the constitution of the infinite would be a logical absurdity. Hence, the ground is cut off from under the foot of the idea of a creation and a creator once for all.

The next corollary is that there could be no variety or distinction in the infinite, for this will amount to the fact that there are *parts* of the infinite, which is absurd. A

part to be itself, must be *some* part, a *finite* part, and *never* an infinite part. An infinite part, if it means anything, means infinity itself. The sum of *finite* parts, however great, can never be infinite. Hence the idea of heterogeneity or any sort of dual existence in the universe must be an *illusion*.

Thus it is abundantly clear that not only should the matter of the traditional materialist which in its ultimate particles was formerly supposed to be void of every attribute except shape and size, having no energy of its own, but 'the purely passive recipient of the shock of the Divine' and now conceived as 'magnetisms with size and shape', of the 'inalienable nature to be forever attracting and forever repelling one another; forever to be grouping together into varying combinations; to be never at rest';—not only should matter, even if it be regarded as an ocean of magnetism, on which the universe floats as a mass of bubbles—a homogeneous body of force out of which different modifications take their rise and merge again,—not only even such a conception of matter, but consciousness too, which is broken up into two, the subjective and the objective, must be regarded as *illusory shows*, if we remain true to our definition of the infinite for one moment.

IF we took Brahman for the Kantian *Ding an sich*, remembering only that according to the Kantian Philosophy, the Rûpa, the forms of intuition and the categories of thought, though subjective, are accepted as true, while the Vedanta treats them also as the result of Nescience, though true for all practical purposes in this phenomenal life. In this sense the Vedanta is more sceptical or critical than even Kant's critical philosophy.....According to Kant it is man who creates the world, as far as its form (Nāmarûpa) is concerned; according to the Vedanta this kind of creation is due to Avidyā. And strange as it may sound to apply that name of Avidyā to Kant's intuitions of sense and his categories of the understanding, there is a common element in them, though hidden under different names.

—Max Müller.

†Virchow and Evolution: Nineteenth Century, Vol. IV, November, '78.

OVERHEARD IN A GARDEN: AN ALLEGORY

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

—Wordsworth.

IN that enchanting part of the world, the Himalayas, one lovely day in early summer, I was sitting in my garden, where numerous flowers bloomed.

Long, long ago, many delightful stories were told of certain godly men, who lived in the recesses of these mountains, dwelling on high thoughts, possessing all the secrets of nature, and never growing old or weary. Surely, my mind must have been pondering on these legends upon this particular occasion, for what with the soul-soothing effect of the gentle air wafted from the snowy summits, and the delicate perfumes floating around me, I seemed to become one with the spirit of nature, and a strange thing happened to me, for I became conversant of a discussion the flowers were carrying on in warm and fragrant breaths.

The subject of their conversation was Sun-worship, and which of their community worshipped in the best manner. An anemone was the first to express an opinion,—she peeped forth, and in a low voice was heard to say, that in her humble way she paid due homage to the sun, but she found him partial in his favours, showing himself more to other flowers than to herself. Her companions stated that this was not true, for it was well known, that the anemone was not anxious for more light, preferring her own obscurity and shade.

The portulaca, a plant of creeping habit, growing close to the ground, and surrounded by weeds, was the next to state her views. "My way is good," she declared, "I have a

liking for the earth, because he supplies my requirements, and I have many admirers: I do not often look at the sun, for he is so powerful and searching in his rays."

Climbing over a trellis near by, was a honey-suckle who, shaking with laughter, interrupted her. "Why," said he, "that is a very poor way, and as for your admirers, they are only dull little weeds, who know nothing. Now, notice how gracefully I extend my arms in worship, bearing a profusion of sweet flowers, thus attracting from far and near, innumerable bees who come to extract my wisdom". Before the portulaca could reply, a stiff, showy sun-flower of rich yellow colour, with a staring black eye, remarked—"I consider the honey-suckle as foolish as the portulaca, for how can a creeper that is so weak as to require support himself,—for was he not depending on the trellis?—talk about knowing the proper means of worshipping the sun: moreover, his boast about the bees was absurd, for they only clustered round him, not to learn, but to satisfy their own needs. Assuredly," he added grandly, "I may be proud of my erect attitude, and golden head, which I always keep turned towards the sun." It was now the rose's opportunity to put in a word. "That is undoubtedly a good plan for you, who cannot act otherwise," she complacently responded, "but not to be compared to the style in which I pay my devotions. I offer a faultless form of magnificent colour, united with a lovely fragrance, which makes me a fitting recipient for the sun's condescension."

Attention was now directed to a pompous voice coming from the direction of the hedge,

where lay an old oak stump, around whose rugged bark a spray of ivy twined. In a deliberate fashion the ivy addressed his companions: "Observe, dear friends, my secure position; I cling to old habits, as my ancestors have done before me, and prefer following our original modes of worship, gathered from my old associate on whose heart I recline."

At this avowal, a chorus of dissent followed, and many voices exclaimed, "Why, do you not know that your so-called guide is corrupt throughout, and nothing but a worthless old trunk: in former times he may have assisted your family in their growth, but those days have passed long since, and if it were not for your persistent blindness, you would have discovered it ere now." The disconcerted ivy was about to protest against these severe comments, when a strong young sapling growing at his side, gently bent down, and whispered him not to be discouraged but to look higher, and renounce his obsolete ideas; at the same time extending an overhanging branch to him, which after a moment's hesitation, the ivy gratefully embraced, and was thus raised from his lowly position. A low murmuring was heard in a quiet nook of the garden, which I noticed proceeded from a bed of tall lilies, distinguished by their beautiful white flowers, and extremely graceful appearance, being elegantly borne on slender stalks which were artificially supported. "Here," they whispered in unison, "do we worship devoutly and well, for note how secluded we are, and of what modest appearance, notwithstanding our incomparable scent and purity." To this, some groups of convolvuli, which had entwined themselves about the adjoining plants, objected,—"for" continued they, "if you were in a more exposed situation, and your props removed, there is no saying, but at the first gust of wind or shower of rain, you might be laid low in the mire. Consider, how liberal we are in our devotion—we embrace all our acquaint-

tances and permit them to learn of us." This conceited utterance was more than the monkshood could allow, so they hastened to assure the convolvuli that they were greatly mistaken in their contention, for instead of advancing the interests of their hapless neighbours, they were retarding their progress, for how could they feel the sun's warmth and see his light, when crushed to earth and smothered in the cumbrous clasp of the convolvuli! Thus rebuked, the creepers made no reply, but I observed that several of the blossoms closed their eyes, and pretended to be meditating. The monkshood admitted the lilies were a little too self-conscious, but their devotion was very sweet and becoming. However, they laid claim that their own brotherhood was the perfect way, though they could not allow that all the other flowers were sufficiently advanced to follow their methods, even if they desired to do so,—for the majority of the dwellers in the garden were still dazzled by the beauties and vanities of fine colour, luxuriant growth and exquisite perfumes, thereby, diverting their attention from the direct sun-light. At this point in the controversy, the evening primrose in grave accents, denied the existence of the sun, on the ground that he had never seen him, but no one took any notice of this assertion, for all the plants knew that the speaker never opened his flowers until after sunset, so his opinion was worthless. Now the centre of the garden was occupied by a stately old deodar, who had lived there for ages, and adored the sun in the truest manner, by simply keeping his head raised to the skies, and contemplating the shining countenance of his Divinity, until he perceived the Sun of Knowledge penetrating all things, and discerned that where he shone all was brightness and happiness. He now sighed profoundly and stirred his branches in warning notes, much to the perturbation of the argumentative flowers growing at his feet, for they deeply revered the

mighty monarch who towered over them in his patriarchal beauty and strength. In impressive tones, he thus addressed them:—"My foolish children, why these hasty words and self-conscious remarks? You have been running wild over this discussion! Listen to me. We all derive our life, beauty and colour from the sun, he causing the variety in expression and growth, and by whatever means we turn to him, he accepts our devotion, as coming from parts of his own manifestation. Only feelings of loving-kindness and harmony must reign in our midst, and by adopting this course and maintaining an equable disposition, we shall form an harmonious whole. How would the master like it, if but *one* kind of flower grew in his garden?—He admires the scent of this, the beauty of that, and so forth: thus, in our several ways, we may rest satisfied in contributing to his pleasure." As the grand old tree ceased his admonitions, a gentle zephyr sprang up, soothing the discomforted flowers, and allaying the irritation caused by the foregoing dispute, at the same instant, sweeping the heart-strings of the noble deodar, who readily responded, expressing in delightful cadences the joys of peace and concord. Suddenly the whole garden broke forth

into a hymn of praise to the glorious sun, and in one loving spirit the flowers gracefully bowed their heads to show their gratitude for his protecting care: the bees flitting from blossom to blossom, ceased to sip their nectar, swelling the song of thanksgiving with a low appreciative hum, while the birds paused in their airy flight to blend their sweet and tender notes in the ravishing strain, the radiant sun at the same time graciously smiling his acceptance of this adoration, and glancing his shining rays into the very hearts of his happy worshipers, bringing bliss and pure delight to that happy little assembly. Such a symphony I never heard—it was beautiful, so beautiful, and its essence stole softly into my inmost being. Thus sweet peace was restored in the garden and rested over all. I was awakened from my reverie by the bells of the neighbouring monastery pealing forth their sonorous chimes, and it was borne in upon me, that I had comprehended the secrets of nature, and communed with the spirit of life. The mystic psalmody still vibrated through and through me in silent rhythm as I reluctantly rose from my seat and turned my steps homewards.

ADVAITIN.

NEW YORK'S JUVENILE VEDANTISTS

UNDER the above heading, with the sub-heading "LITTLE ONES WHO ARE LEARNING BRAHMINISM" and a beautiful photo of "the Swami Abhedananda and some of his youthful pupils in Oriental philosophy," the *New York Herald* of Sunday, March 4, 1900 has the following appreciative notice:—

"Not least among the extraordinary

things of these times is the realization that India, the land of the heathen and benighted, according to popular impressions among our people, is sending missionaries of the Hindoo religion into the very core and heart of our Western civilization. Here in New York a few picturesque monks of the Brahmin faith have banded together a society for the

propagation of their religion and philosophy, which is taking such deep root and spreading so rapidly that children in this city are being reared and trained in the faith of Brahma, and are sent every week to sit at the feet of the Eastern Mahatma to learn wisdom and grace.

"Every Saturday afternoon a class of young boys and girls gathers together in the rooms of the Vedanta Society, in East Fifty-fifth street, to speak an hour or so with the Swami Abhedananda and drink in the teachings of the Hindoo philosophy, which is expounded to them in a most fascinating way. The young people come in with beaming, expectant faces, and draw their chairs around the handsome Oriental figure of the Swami, who sits in the circle wearing a robe of rich red, and holding in his hand an ancient Sanscrit book—the Hitopadesha, or book of "good councils." This book is one of the oldest pieces of literature in the world. It dates back to the thirteenth century B. C.(?) and is the source of all of our fables of animals, our tales and fairy stories.

"The life and teachings of Jesus enter largely into the text of the Vedanta philosophy, and never a lesson goes by but that some saying of Jesus Christ's or some incident of his life is used to illustrate a moral lesson or point a principle.

"The Swami selects a story every Saturday afternoon from the Hitopadesha and tells it to the children. The stories are all about kings and queens and animals who converse freely together upon subjects of astounding range for young minds, but the children sit in rapt

attention, eager for every word. Woven into the glittering fabric of wonder and imagination are all the doctrines of the Vedas—such ideas as reincarnation, karma and yoga, with bits of wit, wisdom and good advice, which will linger, doubtless, in these young minds during all their lives.

"The Swami ends the story, and then follows a little talk about it, and each child is asked to repeat the story in his own way and to tell the moral lessons and reflections which it has given him. It is wonderful to see how much of the real meaning of these tales makes its way into their heads and how eager they are for more.

"A philosophy which calms and embraces all religions is a little wide for the minds of most grown folk, but these young ones seem to take to it with avidity.

"One little boy in the class is so earnest and devout that he sacrifices the whole of his weekly holiday to glean the wisdom dispensed by the Swami, and early Saturday morning he makes his way from Brooklyn and comes to the rooms of the Vedanta Society, where he is allowed to listen to the class of grown up students who are studying the Upanishads with Swami Abhedananda.

"When the children's class was first formed the mammas and aunts of the little ones were allowed to come in with the children, but it soon became evident that the older folk were too eager to take part in the lessons and absorb the attention of the Swami, so that the little ones had no chance. Now all grown folks are excluded, and the Swami and the children have things all their own way."

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor, Prabuddha Bharata.

SIR,

Your valuable monthly appears to be the fit medium for getting intellectually satisfactory solutions of the difficult problems of religious belief which cannot but crop up in every enquiring mind, and this emboldens me to take up in your valuable journal a little space for stating my difficulty and asking for a solution.

Environment and heredity are not sufficient to explain the different temperaments and inclinations of the various minds, and I am prepared to admit that the resultant effects of our past actions

very greatly influence our present condition, but then the difficulty lies in explaining what gave different tendencies to different minds, or souls, or reflections of the Soul, when they first started in the journey of life? Surely they must all have been equally circumstanced in the beginning; admitting they had all free wills, what made one choose a line of action which resulted in misery, and another that in which perpetual happiness was soon secured?

Yours &c.,

AN ENQUIRER.

[See footnote on pages 72-73—Ed.]

NĀNĀ KATHĀ

THE following is the report of Famine Commissioner Major Dunlop Smith on the Kishengurh Orphanage:—

"An orphanage was opened in the city by the Durbar on the 28th December. It is now managed entirely by the Ram Krishna Mission of Bengal, under the supervision of the Dewan. These Missionaries are Vedantists. The head of the Mission is Swami Vivekananda, and the two chief centres are in Calcutta and Mayavati, near Almora. One of the two Missionaries does the clerical work. There is a resident compounder. There are two sweepers and two water carriers. A Brahmin and his wife do all the cooking, and an old woman looks after the girls. There are now in the orphanage 54 boys and 23 girls who are housed in two

separate buildings. They have a meal of Kichari in the morning, and bread and pulse in the evening. They generally get a handful of parched gram in the middle of the day. I checked the store register for three consecutive days, and found that each child consumes about 8½ imperial chittacks a day. The children are in excellent condition, and appear to receive every attention. They were all very happy. Five boys and five girls work in the Cotton Mills, and ten boys are employed in the carpet factory. The girls grind all the flour that is used.

1st March 1900."

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‘WE have repeatedly heard from Mrs. Piper in trance, things of which we were

not at the moment aware. On my mother-in-law's second visit to the medium, she was told that one of her daughters was suffering from a severe pain in the back that day. This altogether unusual occurrence, unknown to the sitter, proved to be true.

'My wife and brother received from Mrs. Piper the announcement of my aunt's death in New York before we had received the telegram breaking the news to us.

'The most convincing things said about my own immediate household were either very intimate or very trivial. Unfortunately, the former things are private and personal. She told of my killing a grey and white cat with ether, and described how it had spun around and around before dying. She told how my New York aunt had written a letter to my wife, warning her against all mediums, and then went off on a most amusing criticism full of traits of the excellent woman's character.

'She was strong on the events in our nursery, and gave striking advice during our first visit to her about the way to deal with certain "tantrums" of our second child, "little Billy boy," as she called him, reproducing his nursery name. She told how the crib creaked at night, how a certain rocking-chair creaked mysteriously, how my wife had heard footsteps on the staircase, etc. Insignificant as these things sound when read, the accumulation of a large number of them has an irresistible effect.'—*Prof. James of Harvard.*

THE following is a list of the fresh contributions received by Swami Kalyanahanda for the Kishengurh Orphanage for which the

Swami offers hearty thanks to the kind donors :—

Through the Math, Belur, Calcutta	...	150
" Editor, Prabuddha Bharata	100	
" Editor Bharati	...	2
" Babu Hari Charan Dutt, Kayastha College, Allahabad	...	25
Babu Indra Nath Chatterjee, Chander-nagore, Bengal	...	3
" Bepin Behari De, Parbatipur, Dinajpur	...	5
Srimati Soudamini Bose, Deoghur	...	10

A CORRECTION.—In the acknowledgment of contributions which appeared in the March number of Prabuddha Bharata, the following mistakes crept in by oversight :—

Babu Gosto Behari Ghosh, Arrah, should be Babu Gosto Behari Sen, Arrah. A friend, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Rs. 10, should be taken out of the list as it is a double entry of what has been shown against the name of Babu Chitta Sakha Sanyal.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks receipt of Rs. 100-8 from Miss Waldo, New York, America, being the amount subscribed by the Vedanta students of the place through herself and Mr. A. Francis Wattson for the famine relief work and of Rs. 100 contributed by a kind friend of Bangalore for the same purpose.

I KNOW not what to think of this beautiful world! Sometimes it is all sunshine and gladness, and heaven itself lies not far off; and then it suddenly changes, and is dark and sorrowful, and the clouds shut out day. In the lives of the saddest of us there are bright moments, like this, when we feel as if we could take the great world in our arms; then come gloomy hours, when the fire will not burn in our hearts, and all without and within is dismal, cold and dark. Believe me, every heart has its secret sorrows, which the world knows not; and oft-times we call a man cold when he is only sad.—*Longfellow.*